

## NEW ERA ADR

---

Case No. 26012203

In the Matter of the Arbitration between

EMILY RENNA, Claimant

and

USA BOBSLED AND SKELETON, Respondent

and

JADIN O'BRIEN and ELENA MEYERS-TAYLOR, Affected Athletes.

---

### FINAL REASONED AWARD

I, the undersigned Arbitrator, having been designated by New Era ADR, and in accordance with the Ted Stevens Olympic and Amateur Sports Act ("ASA"), 36 U.S.C. §220505 et seq., and Section 9 of the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee ("USOPC") Bylaws, having been duly sworn, and having fully considered the Claimant's January 22, 2026 Amended Complaint and Demand for Expedited Arbitration and the testimony, exhibits and argument presented during the total nine and one-half hour video arbitration hearing held on January 23 and 24, 2026, do hereby Award as follows:

### FACTUAL AND PROCEDURAL HISTORY

This matter involves the selection of athletes for the U.S. Olympic Team in the two-woman bobsled event at the 2026 Olympic Winter Games. Claimant Emily Renna was

one of the athletes competing for a “push” (aka brakeman) position in one of the three two-woman bobsleds allocated to the United States for those Games.

On January 19, 2026, USA Bobsled and Skeleton (“US Bobsled”) announced the names of the athletes who would be nominated to the 2026 U.S. Olympic Team. The announced pairings for the two-woman bobsled were (1) Kaille Armbruster-Humphries (pilot)<sup>1</sup> and Jasmine Jones (brakeman); (2) Kaysha Love (pilot) and Azaria Hill (brakeman); and (3) Elana Meyers-Taylor (pilot) and Jadin O’Brien (brakeman). Ms. Renna was named as an alternate to the team.

On January 22, 2026, Ms. Renna submitted her Amended Complaint and Demand for Expedited Arbitration under Section 9 of the USPOC Bylaws. In sum, Ms. Renna asserted that US Bobsled’s five member Olympic Team selection committee (the “committee” or “selection committee”):

- abused its discretion and acted arbitrarily and capriciously regarding the application of discretionary selection criteria;
- acted in bad faith in a purposeful attempt to misapply selection standards so as to deprive Ms. Renna of a place on the team; and
- violated the Ted Stevens Act by its inconsistent application of selection criteria.

Ms. Renna requested expedited arbitration and sought an order either: (a) compelling US Bobsled to replace Ms. O’Brien with Ms. Renna as brakeman in the sled to be piloted by Ms. Meyers-Taylor, or (b) reversing the committee’s decision and remanding the matter back to US Bobsled with directions to properly apply the selection criteria.

Also on January 22, 2026, the Arbitrator was appointed and Neutral Disclosures were completed. That evening, a pre-hearing conference was held via Zoom.<sup>2</sup> At that

---

<sup>1</sup> The two members of each two-woman bobsled team are the “pilot” (aka driver) and the push/brakeman.

<sup>2</sup> Counsel were present for Ms. Renna, Affected Athlete Ms. O’Brien and US Bobsled, along with Messrs. Aaron Majarros and Matt Kaiser as observers from USOPC and Aron McGuire,

conference, the parties agreed that the arbitration hearing would commence via Zoom on Friday January 23, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. (EST), during which session opening statements and testimony of any witnesses located in the United States would be presented. It was further agreed that, in order to accommodate athletes and other witnesses who were in Europe, the hearing would reconvene on Saturday January 24, 2026, via Zoom at 9:00 a.m. (EST), during which session those witnesses who were in Europe would give testimony and closing arguments would be presented.

The video arbitration hearing commenced on January 23, 2026. The parties presented their opening statements, and testimony was presented by selection committee chair Curt Tomasevich, PhD (Olympic Gold and Silver medalist and Director of Sport Performance for US Bobsled).<sup>3</sup> On January 24, 2026, the arbitration hearing continued with testimony by selection committee members Jamie Poser (2014 Olympic Bronze medalist) and Chris Fogt (2014 Olympic Silver medalist and current Head Coach for US Bobsled), Ms. Renna, Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Meyers-Taylor.<sup>4</sup> The parties presented their closing arguments, and all parties acknowledged that they had been given a fair opportunity to fully present their positions. The arbitration hearing was then closed.

## **JURISDICTION**

The Arbitrator has undisputed jurisdiction to resolve this dispute, pursuant to 36 U.S.C. §§ 220529(a) and 220522(4)(B), and §§ 9.1 and 9.2 of the USOPC Bylaws, and

---

CEO of US Bobsled. Affected Athlete Elena Meyers-Taylor had not yet joined, but did so on the morning of January 23, 2026, and was represented by counsel throughout the remainder of this proceeding.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to the hearing on January 23, 2026, the parties submitted a joint statement of applicable legal standards, their exhibit and witness lists, and the documentary exhibits they intended to present during the arbitration hearing. The parties also submitted a Confidentiality Agreement regarding certain documents that were used as exhibits in this proceeding.

<sup>4</sup> Also present at both arbitration sessions were counsel for all parties and Affected Athletes, Matthew Kaiser and Aaron Mojarras (observers for the U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee), and Aron McGuire (CEO of US Bobsled).

because Ms. Renna alleges that she was deprived of a participation opportunity at the 2026 Olympic Winter Games, a “protected competition” under § 1.3(l) and (x) of those Bylaws.

### **BURDEN OF PROOF AND STANDARD OF REVIEW**

As agreed by the parties, Ms. Renna had the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence that the selection process for the 2026 U.S. Olympic Bobsled Team was arbitrary or capricious (i.e., there was no rational basis for the outcome).<sup>5</sup> Put another way, she was required to show that US Bobsled “breached the approved and published Procedures, applied the Procedures inconsistently to athletes similarly situated, acted in bad faith toward or with bias against the athlete, and/or violated applicable federal or state laws.”<sup>6</sup>

The Arbitrator’s sole focus in this *de novo* proceeding is to “determine whether [Ms. Renna] had a fair opportunity to compete for a position on [the 2026 Olympic team] and whether [US Bobsled’s] Team Selection Committee used and rationally applied the published [Athlete Selection Procedures]. [The arbitrator’s] role is not to determine whether [US Bobsled] chose the best process for selecting teams.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> *Craig v. USA Taekwondo*, AAA Case No. 77 190E 00144 11 JENF (Aug. 21, 2011); *Rivera v. USA Cycling, Inc.*, AAA Case No. 01 160002 6302 (July 26, 2016); see also *Wright v. Amateur Softball Assn.*, AAA Case No. 301900046602 (Jan. 23, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> *Huck v. USA Cycling*, AAA Case No. 01-21-0004-3201 (June 29, 2021); see also *Craig v. USA Taekwondo, Inc.*, AAA Case No. 77 190E 00144 11 JENF (Aug. 21, 2011); *Hyatt v. USA Judo*, AAACase No. 01 14 0000 7635 (June 27, 2014); *Tibbs v. United States Paralympics*, AAA Case No. 71-190-E-00406 12 JENF (Aug. 28, 2012).

<sup>7</sup> *Matter of Victor Lui and USA Table Tennis Association, Inc.*, AAA Case No. 01-19-0001-4377 (June 20, 2019), p. 18, quoting *Matter of Beckom and USBFF*, AAA Case No. 77-190-E-0015-10 (Feb. 10, 210), p. 8 (internal citations omitted) (emphasis in original), see *Lange v. USA Cycling*, New Era ADR Case No. 24062101 (Aug. 6, 2024), p. 3. Ms. Renna acknowledged that she was not challenging the selection criteria, only the way in which they were applied here.

## US BOBSLED'S DISCRETIONARY SELECTION CRITERIA

US Bobsled's Bobsled Athlete Selection Procedures for the 2026 Olympic Winter Games (the "Procedures") state in relevant part:

### Section 7: Discretionary Criteria to Nominate Athletes for the Team:

#### 7.1 Rationale for Utilizing Discretionary Selection: ...

2) In the nomination of push athletes who will compete together as a team, it is difficult to make nomination decisions based solely upon objective criteria. It is the belief of USABS that considering a mix of selection criteria, which **includes subjective components as well as objective data to evaluate performance ability, will provide USABS with the best chance to win the maximum number of medals at the Games** (emphasis added)....

#### 7.2.2 Push Athlete Nomination

Push athletes ... will be nominated to the Team by the Team Selection Committee using the criteria below.... The following criteria listed in priority order by tier will be considered by the Team Selection Committee when determining discretionary selections for push athletes....

Tier 1: The highest emphasis will be placed on:

- Upward/downward trend of push times, start rank, and velocity at the start in IBSF and USABS sanctioned events
- Results from the Evaluation Events listed in Section 5.<sup>8</sup>

Tier 2: The next highest emphasis will be placed on:

- Proven international experience with history/results of team combinations emphasizing top six (6) start times and finishes at the Evaluation Events listed in §5.
- 2025 Push Championships combination results (time and velocity)

---

<sup>8</sup> The §5 Evaluation Events were identified as:

- 2025 IBSF World Championships;
- National Selection Races;
- National Push Championships;
- National Selection Races (not held);
- 2025/2026 IBSF World Cup races;
- 2025/2026 IBSF Europa Cup races; and
- 2025/2026 IBSF North America Cup races.

As discussed below, Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien each competed in some, but not all, of these events.

- 2025 Push Championships individual results (time and velocity)
- Team results at the 2025/26 Selection Races with focus on both the start performance and finish results.
- Size and weight of the push athlete

Tier 3: Other criteria to consider:

- Pre-season 30-meter sprint and vertical jump results
- Athlete input requested from athletes via a Qualysis survey (collected by Team Selection Committee athlete representatives prior to the Team Selection Committee meeting) ...

Pilot/Push Athlete Combinations shall be assembled by the Team Selection Committee in consultation with the nominated Olympic Team Pilots and Push Athletes using the Push Athlete criteria above. Final Team combinations will be decided at the Olympic Games by the Team Selection Committee.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Selection Committee Did Not Act Arbitrarily or Capriciously in Applying the Discretionary Selection Criteria**

All three members of the selection committee who testified in this matter presented consistent descriptions of how the selection process played out here, and Ms. Renna offered no materially contradicting evidence.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after the conclusion of the last World Cup races in Germany on January 19, 2026, the selection committee convened to decide who would represent the United States at the upcoming Winter Games. Selection criteria for the pilots was a purely mathematical matter based on their finishes in World Cup racing, so those athletes were quickly identified. The committee then turned its attention to the push athletes. The top two pushers were quickly identified (Ms. Jones and Ms. Hill), which left the third and final push slot to be determined.

---

<sup>9</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-1.

<sup>10</sup> Ms. Renna testified that a selection committee member who did not testify in this proceeding told her that Ms. O'Brien was selected solely as a development project. However, this hearsay testimony does not outweigh the consistent first-hand testimony of the three selector witnesses.

The three selector witnesses testified that the committee examined each of the §7 criteria and placed the highest emphasis on the Tier 1 criteria, the second highest on the Tier 2 criteria, and the third highest on the Tier 3 criteria. Using their significant experience and expertise to assess these criteria, in order to give Ms. Meyers-Taylor the best chance to medal (per §7.1[2]), they spent between three and four hours in a “back and forth” discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the candidates from “every angle possible” to conduct the “most comprehensive review as possible.” Three athletes – Ms. Renna, Ms. O’Brien and Slyvia Hoffman – were initially in the running for pairing with five-time Olympic medalist Ms. Meyers-Taylor. Ms. Hoffman was eliminated first, and the committee spent the bulk of its deliberation discussing Ms. Renna and Ms. O’Brien.

**Tier 1:** Ms. Renna and Ms. O’Brien competed in the following §5 evaluative events:

- **2025 World Championships** (March 3-16, 2025): Ms. Renna placed fourth paired with Ms. Armbruster-Humphries in the two-woman sled at this event in Lake Placid, NY.<sup>11</sup> Ms. O’Brien had not yet started bobsledding at this time.
- **National Push Championships** (September 8, 2025): Ms. Renna finished .02 seconds faster in the 30-meter sprint and jumped .3 inches higher in the vertical jump than Ms. O’Brien. In the three heats of sled pushing events, Ms. O’Brien did slightly better overall because of Ms. Renna’s weak performance in the second heat:

Heat 1: Renna 4<sup>th</sup> and O’Brien 5<sup>th</sup>

Heat 2: Renna 8<sup>th</sup> and O’Brien 4<sup>th</sup>

Heat 3: Renna 4<sup>th</sup> and O’Brien 5<sup>th</sup><sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> Renna Ex. 4.

<sup>12</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-6 and Renna Ex. 9.

In the Team Pushing event both Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien were paired with Ms. Meyers-Taylor. Ms. Renna's time was slightly faster (.08 seconds), while Ms. O'Brien's velocity was slightly faster (.003 seconds) in her first ever team push test.<sup>13</sup>

Having recently completed her final NCAA track and field season (where she was a multiple national champion), Ms. O'Brien had begun learning to push a bobsled just two or three weeks before the National Push Championships. The selection committee found it significant that Ms. O'Brien showed such effectiveness pushing a sled with so little experience, and anticipated that she would show even better results as she developed in the sport.

- **2025/2-26 World Cup Races:** The selectors emphasized data regarding start time and sled velocity at 50 meters, which reflect push effectiveness.<sup>14</sup>
  - **Sigulda, Latvia** (December 21, 2025):
    - Run 1: Time: Renna 5.34/O'Brien 5.31  
Velocity: Renna 41.1/O'Brien 41.0
    - Run 2: Time: Renna 5.34/O'Brien 5.30  
Velocity: Renna 40.9/O'Brien 41.1

Ms. Renna was paired with Ms. Armbruster-Humphries, and while they finished first, the committee felt that this was more a reflection of Ms. Armbruster-Humphries' driving ability on this particularly challenging track. Ms. O'Brien and Ms. Meyers-Taylor's fourth place finish was Ms. Meyers-Taylor's best start and finish of the season for her, and their push times were better than those of the Renna/Armbruster-Humphries sled. This was the only time that Ms. Meyers-Taylor's sled out-pushed Ms. Armbruster-Humphries' sled.

---

<sup>13</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-7.

<sup>14</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-5, Renna Exs. 6-8, 14.

- **San Moritz, Switzerland** (January 11, 2026):

Ms. Renna raced with Ms. Love, and Ms. O'Brien raced with Ms. Meyers-Taylor. On the Tuesday before the Sunday race, however, the Meyers-Taylor/O'Brien pair were in a "horrific" crash during practice. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Nevertheless, because the U.S. Team needed the San Moritz World Cup points to secure a third slot at the Olympics in this event, Ms. Meyers-Taylor and Ms. O'Brien raced on Sunday in a borrowed sled with just a single practice in it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Run 1: Time: Renna 5.51/O'Brien 5.57  
Velocity: Renna 41.2/O'Brien 41.0  
Run 2: Time: Renna 5.46/O'Brien 5.56  
Velocity: Renna 41.6/O'Brien 41.2

Ms. Renna's sled finished 8<sup>th</sup> place, and Ms. O'Brien's sled finished 10<sup>th</sup>. The selection committee found Ms. Renna's start ranks (5<sup>th</sup> overall) to be "disappointing" in light of the fact that Ms. Love is the best pusher among the team's pilots. The fact that they finished three places below their start rank indicated a less than good starting push. While the selection committee placed less emphasis on this race because of Ms. O'Brien's injuries, they

noted that her velocity figures were very close to Ms. Renna's, even though she was functioning at only about 70%.

- **Altenberg, Germany** (January 18, 2026):

Ms. Renna competed with Ms. Meyers-Taylor at this event.<sup>15</sup> Their start velocities for both runs were relatively slow compared to the rest of the field – 7<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> -- particularly because some of the other teams at this event were using back-up pushers. Ms. Meyers-Taylor described this result as “concerning,” merely “average” and not enough to be competitive for a podium finish at the Olympics.

The selection committee placed more emphasis on the later events, in the belief that they are more indicative of what could be expected at the February 2026 Games. Overall, they found that Ms. Renna's performance was consistent, but not strong enough to help Ms. Meyers-Taylor compete for an Olympic medal. Ms. Renna had been on the U.S. National Team since the 2020-2021 season, and there was concern that she had “plateaued.”<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, Ms. O'Brien had only one World Cup race that could be legitimately used for direct comparison, due to her injury at St. Moritz. However, she was making steady improvements as she learned the sport, she was viewed as a better partner for Ms. Meyers-Taylor and was expected to improve significantly in the time leading up to the Olympics as that pairing trained together each day.

**Tier 2:**

- At the evaluation events, as set out above, Ms. Renna's performance was seen as consistent but not great; she seemed to have plateaued. Her fourth-place finish at the 2025 World Championships was seen as primarily the result of the pilot's performance. Ms. O'Brien's start ranks were better, especially in Sigulda,

---

<sup>15</sup> Ms. O'Brien did not race in this event, twelve days after the St. Moritz crash.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., US Bobsled Ex. R-13.

and she was seen as a steady improver as she became more skilled with the sled.

- At the Push Championships, Ms. Renna had slightly better start times and velocities in two of the three heats, but her second heat was significantly weaker than Ms. O'Brien's.<sup>17</sup> Again, this competition occurred just a few weeks into Ms. O'Brien's bobsled career, while Ms. Renna had been pushing for five or six years. In the sprint time and vertical jump tests, Ms. Renna jumped slightly higher, but Ms. O'Brien had a faster sprint time. In the Team Pushing event both Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien were paired with Ms. Meyers-Taylor. Ms. Renna's time was slightly faster (.08 seconds), while Ms. O'Brien's velocity was slightly faster (.003 seconds) in her first ever team push test.<sup>18</sup> Here, again, these two athletes were very close early in the season.
- Turning to size and weight, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] both Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien would meet the weight standards if teamed with Ms. Meyers-Taylor.

**Tier 3:**

- As noted above, the early season sprint and vertical jump results were very close and split between Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien.
- There were two rounds of athlete input surveys. The first round was conducted early in the 2025-2026 season, before Ms. O'Brien joined the training team. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]<sup>19</sup> In the second round of athlete surveys, less than a week before Olympic Team selection and when both athletes were in the athlete pool, [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

---

<sup>17</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-6.

<sup>18</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-7.

<sup>19</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-14.

[REDACTED] <sup>20</sup> [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <sup>21</sup>

Finally, pursuant to the last sentence of §7.2.2, the selection committee also consulted with Ms. Meyers-Taylor, the pilot with whom this last push athlete would be paired. Ms. Meyers-Taylor told the committee that she believed Ms. O'Brien would be the best pairing for her and would give her the best chance at another Olympic medal. The committee members and Ms. Meyers-Taylor all testified that her expression of preference did not determine the committee's decision, but it was taken into consideration.<sup>22</sup>

Ms. Renna argued that it was improper for the committee to ask for Ms. Meyers-Taylor's input prior to the pushers having been named to the team, reading the term "nominated" in the last sentence of §7.2.2 as applying to both pilots and pushers. However, given the location of this sentence in the pusher selection section of the Procedures, it was reasonable for the committee to interpret that term as modifying only the term "pilots," who were nominated to the team before pusher selection began.

Overall, the committee found that Ms. Renna and Ms. O'Brien were very close based on the available data, but after a thorough evaluation, they concluded that Ms. O'Brien provided the best chance for a medal at these Games.<sup>23</sup> Rather than a "development project," they viewed Ms. O'Brien as an elite athlete who had proven that she "will show up when it matters," who exhibited resilience and continued improvement. They concluded that the data showed that the pairing of Ms. Meyers-Taylor with Ms. O'Brien

---

<sup>20</sup> US Bobsled Ex. R-20.

<sup>21</sup> [REDACTED]

<sup>22</sup> At a prior Olympics, the committee did not follow Ms. Meyers-Taylor's expressed preference and paired her with another pusher.

<sup>23</sup> See, US Bobsled Exs. R-13 and R-19.

was faster and more competitive than pairing Ms. Meyers-Taylor with Ms. Renna. The Arbitrator finds that this was a reasonable conclusion, supported by ample evidence, and neither arbitrary nor capricious.

### **The Selection Committee Did Not Act in Bad Faith in Making Its Discretionary Selection**

Ms. Renna argued that the three-to-four-hour committee discussion was somehow evidence of a predetermined result in favor of Ms. O'Brien. As discussed above, however, the testimony at the arbitration hearing established that the committee spent that time performing a detailed analysis and comparison of Ms. Renna's and Ms. O'Brien's performances in the various tests, competitions and the other criteria set out in the Procedures. In fact, Mr. Fogt testified that he initially went into the committee meeting thinking that Ms. Renna had an edge in the selection assessment, but changed his mind during the hours of "back and forth" discussion of the two final candidates. He further testified that committee members advocated for Ms. Renna, as well as for Mr. O'Brien, and that no selector was "dead set" on Ms. O'Brien at the outset of their deliberations. Ultimately, the decision was unanimous.

Ms. Renna also suggested that the decision to downplay Ms. O'Brien's results after the crash in St. Moritz reflected an attempt to skew the data in her favor. However, the committee witnesses testified that this was not the case, and Ms. Renna offered no evidence to support her argument in this regard. Testimony established that similar consideration was given to the fact that Ms. Renna's hand slipped from the push handle at St. Moritz, and to another athlete where severely adverse weather conditions impacted their performance. The Arbitrator finds that it was reasonable for the committee to take into account the significant injuries Ms. O'Brien suffered just days before that race, and not penalize her for them.

## Conclusion and Decision

The Arbitrator therefore finds that the selection committee properly applied the published selection criteria and utilized reasonable discretion in making its unanimous selection determination. The evidence presented reveals that the selection committee considered all of the selection criteria set out in the Procedures, and weighted them as set out in those Procedures. They acknowledged that both athletes were of extremely high quality, and that this was a complex decision, but ultimately, they reasonably found that Ms. O'Brien was the better choice. Even if reasonable persons could disagree on the selector's choice, as discussed in detail above, the Arbitrator finds that Ms. Renna did not meet her burden to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the discretionary selection process for the 2026 Olympic Bobsled Team was carried out in a manner that was arbitrary or capricious, with bad faith or in violation of applicable law.

ACCORDINGLY, The Arbitrator rules as follows:

- Claimant's request for relief is DENIED;
- The parties shall bear their own attorney's fees and costs associated with this arbitration;
- The administrative fees associated with this arbitration and expenses of the Arbitrator shall be borne by the parties as incurred; and
- This Award shall be in full and final resolution of all claims and defenses submitted to this Arbitration. The Arbitrator has considered all the arguments made by the parties, whether or not they are specifically referenced in this Award. All claims not expressly granted herein are hereby denied.

IT IS SO AWARDED.

Dated: February 10, 2026



Kristen J. Thorsness, Esq., OLY  
Arbitrator